Dear Dr. Lysnyansky,

First, may I wish you great success with this proposal. It is clearly of great contemporary relevance but also based on unique research and resources and is a work a wide range of professions and individuals will be drawn to. I’m sure, if you highlight all of these things in more detail — I suggest how to below and in the more detailed notes on your draft — CUP or another prestigious publisher will receive it very positively. The following is a recap of the outstanding comments that appear throughout the text.

**Title**

I appreciate that your suggestion is both clever and alliterative, but I wonder whether it pitches your book at the right level as an in-depth sociological and theological study with a likely readership in the academic, research, journalistic, and political worlds, as you rightly go on to say it will have. It may seem a disjuncture to link something as seriously sociological as your study to something as prosaic as traditional eating habits. It has also a particularly French association, but your book covers Italy too, so it seems to lack an overarching character. I’d further suggest that “crescents” is not exclusively redolent of Islam to an English-speaking audience, at least at first. I’d suggest something along the lines of *Preaching Islam in Romance Lands: The Cases of France and Italy.* I know that this is definitely duller than your original, but I felt that you should suggest the seriousness of your scholarship tonally and chose something which will strike potential readers as intruiging, as an angle they hadn’t thought about before. Mentioning “romance” in its broadest sense evokes, of course, the Latinate traditions of Roman Catholicism, the most significant religious influence traditionally in your two countries, but each with very different histories, especially in view of French *laïcité* on the one hand and the Vatican’s Roman surroundings on the other. Of course, you’ll be the ultimate judge on something so personal to you and your labours.

**Book Rationale**

Here, I’d strongly suggest addressing explicitly your book’s “rationale, scope and unique selling points,” as CUP put it. CUP also seeks from a book proposal the details of how your book “makes a significant and original contribution to the literature”. Thus, the assessor of your proposal is likely to want to know what your methods were, what your summary findings were, what new data you have brought to light, how it informs the debate in the existing literature: in short, what you say and do that nobody else has said and done.I’d also suggest that this requires forsaking any false modesty and selling it a little harder, without overclaiming, of course. I would imagine it would take two or three paragraphs to do this at the very least. I appreciate that you might like a punchier proposal, but the assessor needs to see the meat on the bones, as it were.

I believe it would help to stress the unique insights your extensive interviews have given you. I’d also suggest providing details of other scholarly work you have done in like areas that will highlight how deep and wide-ranging your knowledge is and yet how sensitive you have been to the particularities of France and Italy here.

It is important here is not to be too general about the topics and spend too long on what those other than yourself say. It helps to demonstrate that you have considered the relevant opinions of others, as I suggest below, but what will sell it to a potential publisher are the specifics of what you say about the issues involved that are interesting, challenging and unique.

I accept it’s hard, but I think it would help your case very much to tell the assessor in a few sentences or two how the meaning of the term *da’wa* has changed, what the debates around how it’s used have been and, importantly, how you see what has happened to it within France and Italy. Mostly importantly, I suggest you provide a sentence or two to capture at least some of the unique character of these *da’wa* practices? I suspect the publisher will value a broad sense of it from your perspective and view your proposal more sympathetically in the detail you go on to provide. At the moment, the proposal lacks enough sense of what your message is about *da’wa* and modern Islamic communities in France and Italy. More detail is needed about how you examine them: how the interviews worked, what the extant literature says and where its limitations are; what multimedia material you draw on; and so on. The publisher will want to know the broad outlines at least of how you have conducted your study, what its distinct advantages are, and what specific insights it has allowed you to develop. In short, the specifics of the book’s messaging need fleshing out more in this section.

**Readership**

What you have written is very good, showing the wide scope of the potential market. You could enhance it even more by adding libraries, NGOs, digital sites, and more, as well as mentioning an international audience and its value as a teaching tool.

**Chapter Summaries**

The separate chapter summaries have been incorporated into the proposal, since the prospective publisher will almost certainly prefer a “one-stop shop.” Please note that the chapter structure in the two documents you have provided do not quite match, as I indicate in detail. I have suggested slightly different, perhaps more attention-grabbing chapter titles too.

More specifically, there are no summaries for chapters 5 and 7, which seem critical for conveying the substance of the book’s message. In addition, the summary for chapter 6 has very general observations, but does not provide enough sense of what your view is and how you have arrived at it.

In general, although the chapter titles do clearly suggest the scope of each one, I would suggest much more focus on you and what you argue in each chapter in a way that also drills down into what periods you look at, what data, methods and so on you draw on, and highlights the unique content that you provide.From what you have provided currently, the CUP assessor will have a clear idea that you have a very logical structure in mind but won’t be certain how, at least in outline, you define your scope and what is new about your research. I think what is important here is not to be too general about the topics, but to be more specific about what you say about them that is interesting and unique.

**Relation to Existing Literature**

This section needs more detail, citing specific titles as well as more content analysis. The publisher will want to assess how your approach continues or discontinues the approach of each of these authors and, at least in outline, why. For example, what relation does your work have to some of the following and how does it reframe, challenge, recontextualise, add depth to (relevant parts of) extant literature (and if these are not representative or relevant to you, please substitute others for them):

Kate Zebiri Muslims and Christians Face to Face

Larry Poston *Islamic Da`wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam*

Itzchak Weismann and Jamal Malik (eds.) *Culture of Da’wa: Islamic Preaching in the Modern World*

Matthew J. Kuiper *Da’wa: A Global History of Islamic Missionary Thought and Practice*

Torsten Janson’s “Da’wa”chapter inMacMillan’s Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World

Sharif Gemie *French Muslims: New Voices in Contemporary France*

Vito Salierno *The Muslims in Italy*

I would suggest listing five to six key books, as suggested above, with a brief description followed by an explanation of what your work contributes. The danger, otherwise, is that you say your book is both unique but also “corresponds” with the work of these other writers, without concretely indicating why it is worth publishing your book in particular.

The unique character of your research, which is one of a kind in terms of breadth and scale as you say, may need further defining and calibrating for the potential publisher. For example: Where/how does it go into more depth than others have? What new angles does it provide the reader with? What does it do that the other writers you mention do not do, do not do to the same degree, or do inadequately?

**Author**

CUP does not require a full CV but prefers a description of your background as it relates to the book. Publishers are also interested in the scope and potential your work has, in legacy and digital media forms, to enhance access and exposure. You should provide some details of international journals in which you have published, international conferences and seminars you have presented at, media interviews with or articles on you, your social media presence, and so on. All of this can seem a chore, but publishers are conscious that the book form is encountering the digital wave and that they need to try and ride it too.

**Book Specifications**

This section should be at the end of the proposal. It would be best to estimate the numbers of words rather than pages in the book, a timeframe for its completion, and detail any graphic material it may include (illustrations, tables, charts, etc.).

I will be happy to answer any questions you have on my comments and to review the revisions you make. Thank you for the opportunity to learn about your very interesting work.

Dr. John Peate